

Cc: Payne, Dale (SOLGEN) <Dale.Payne@ontario.ca>; Insiya Essajee <Insiya.Essajee@OHRC.on.ca>

Subject: Re: OCDC Ramadan Fasting

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Thank you for this update. Can we share it with the stakeholders that reached out to us about this issue or will you be providing it directly?

Sent from my iPhone

On May 13, 2020, at 8:07 AM, McGurn, Suzanne (SOLGEN) <Suzanne.McGurn@ontario.ca> wrote:

Hi Renu,

You may be aware that on May 8, 2020, the Muslim Link website posted a media article reporting that the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC) was refusing to accommodate Ramadan fasting for inmates requiring medication. The article identified that calls to the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project's (CPEP's) Jail Accountability and Information Line (JAIL) beginning on April 24, 2020 by Muslim inmates complaining that medication distribution had interrupted Ramadan fasting, prompted the media release.

I would like to begin by assuring you that the Ministry of the Solicitor General is committed to providing all inmates with access to spiritual and religious care from a faith group of their choice, as well as access to their traditional spiritual practices. In support of this policy, Correctional Services provides multifaith spiritual and religious services to inmates and grants access to institutions by all faith groups. I am aware that under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, Correctional Services has a duty to accommodate inmate spiritual and religious needs short of undue hardship. We are committed to granting inmate requests for spiritual and religious services and items unless there are health and safety risks that amount to undue hardship.

It is my understanding that on April 25, 26 and 29, 2020, as well as on May 2 and May 3, 2020, medications at the OCDC were not able to be distributed during non-fasting hours due to unforeseen staffing issues within the facility. I am assured that on all other occasions since the beginning of Ramadan, medication rounds have been facilitated within the appropriate time frames.

Institution officials are aware of the situation and have issued written direction to all staff at the facility related to procedures for distributing medications during Ramadan. Staff have been clearly directed to serve medications only after an individual has broken their fast. Procedures to ensure appropriate distribution have been established and put into place; I am confident that the issue has been suitably remedied.

Sincerely,
Suzanne

If you have any accommodation needs or require communication supports or alternate formats, please let me know. Si vous avez des besoins en matière d'adaptation, ou si vous nécessitez des aides à la communication ou des médias substituts, veuillez me le faire savoir.

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